

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 SCCT-01 SY-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /060 W

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P R 191600Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6283

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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LONDON POUCH BELFAST

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS EI UK (NI)

SUBJ: PROVO TRUCE?

1. CONTACTS IN BOTH GOVT AND OPPOSITION NOW THINK IT LIKELY THAT
CHRISTMAS TRUCE WILL RESULT FROM MEETING IN FEAKLE BETWEEN PROVISIONA
L

IRA AND PROTESTANT CHURCHMEN (DUBLIN 1790). CONTACTS WOULD LIKE TO
THINK TRUCE COULD BE EXTENDED INTO A LASTING CEASEFIRE, BUT THIS IS
MUCH MORE DIFFICULT STEP.

2. OPTIMISM IS ENCOURAGED BY PRESS REPORTS THAT CHURCHMEN ARE, IN
SOME DEGREE, ACCEPTED AS INTERMEDIARIES BY BOTH BRITISH GOVT AND
PROVOS. FROM WHAT HAS LEAKED OUT ABOUT THE "NEGOTIATIONS,"
CHURCHMEN HAVE MADE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO BRIDGE THE WIDE GAP
BETWEEN PROVO AND BRITISH CONDITIONS. (CONGEN BELFAST IS
SENDING MORE DETAIL ON TRUCE "TERMS.")

3. COMMENT: WHILE IT MAY APPEAR PARADOXICAL, PROTESTANT
CHURCHMEN HAVE SOME LEVERAGE WITH IRA, SINCE AN APPEAL CAN BE
MADE TO PROVOS' CLAIMED NON-SECTARIAN PRINCIPLES. (IRA HAS A
LONG HISTORY OF IGNORING CATHOLIC CLERGY.) CHURCHMEN ARE ALSO
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IN A GOOD POSITION TO CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT OFFICIAL BRITISH

GOVT EMBARRASSMENT.

4. UNFORTUNATELY, PAST TRUCE ATTEMPTS HAVE SHOWN HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO RECONCILE PROVO AMBITIONS WITH REQUIREMENTS FOR A LASTING PEACE. A SHORT TRUCE WOULD, OF COURSE, BE NICE -- BUT NOT NECESSARILY MEANINGFUL. A BRIEF TRUCE MIGHT, IN FACT, ONLY RESULT IN NEW PUBLICITY AND STATUS FOR THE IRA. A LASTING CEASEFIRE WOULD BE A REAL BREAKTHROUGH, BUT PROVOS HAVE NOT YET GIVEN SIGNS OF WILLINGNESS TO MAKE THAT KIND OF CONCESSION.
MOORE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PROTESTANTS, ARMISTICE, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974DUBLIN01815
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740369-0864
From: DUBLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741223/aaaaatls.tel
Line Count: 71
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <26 MAR 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROVO TRUCE?
TAGS: PINS, EI, UK, (NI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005